

Wake County Beekeepers Association Beekeeping Calendar

V2.1

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Calendar timing is approximate; weather can accelerate or delay flowering plants and bee activity. Watch for indicators and signs and then take action as appropriate.

Version 1.0 November 8, 2021	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December							
<p>The Bees</p> <p>Thousands of workers, tight winter cluster, little activity.</p> <p>Cleansing flights on a warm day (45°-50°).</p> <p>Queen begins to lay late December (after winter solstice)</p> <p>Some worker brood will begin to appear this month.</p> <p>Few if any drones present.</p> <p><u>Sources:</u> The Beekeeper's Year, NCSU Calendar for Beekeeping in Central NC, 2019, Nancy Ruppert Dr Buddy's Beekeeping Calendar for the NC Piedmont</p>	<p>Clear any snow from entrance (not usually a problem in our area).</p> <p>May start feeding, continue once you start until they are gathering their own food.</p> <p>Catch up on your reading.</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings and bee school.</p> <p>Get your equipment ready for spring.</p>	<p>Queen increases laying, few drones.</p> <p>Workers take cleansing flights on warm days.</p> <p>Bees consume about 25 pounds of food (combined stores and maple nectar).</p> <p>On a warm day quickly and carefully check the hive for sufficient food supplies.</p> <p>Observe exterior of the hive</p> <p>Sign up for an advanced beekeeper course.</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings.</p> <p>Get your equipment ready for spring.</p>	<p>Days becoming longer, the queen steadily increases her rate of egg laying.</p> <p>More brood means more food will be consumed.</p> <p>Many drones may begin to appear.</p> <p>Populations are becoming high in preparation for coming nectar flow, but food stores can run dangerously low until the flow starts.</p> <p>First of package bees arrive. Any nucs offered for sale are almost all being raised in Florida or south Georgia.</p>	<p>Early blossoms appear with improved weather.</p> <p>Bees continue to bring in pollen.</p> <p>Laying accelerates, population growing fast.</p> <p>More package bees available</p> <p>First of locally produced nucs and queens available.</p>	<p>Hives are very active, nectar and pollen should begin to come into the hive thick and fast.</p> <p>This is the peak of the egg laying season for the queen.</p> <p>The hive should be bursting with busy buzzing bees.</p> <p>Watch orientation flights regularly to gauge population increases (lawn chair optional).</p> <p>Local nucs and Queens available.</p>	<p>Hives that haven't swarmed will be boiling with bees.</p> <p>The queen's rate of egg laying may drop a little bit late this month when nectar dearth begins.</p> <p>Bees spring is over.</p> <p>Local nucs and Queens available.</p>	<p>Bees will begin to hang around outside the hive (wash-boarding)</p> <p>The outside activity is beginning to slow down as the nectar flow decreases.</p> <p>Bees population begins to decline</p>	<p>The colony's population continues to drop.</p> <p>Drones are still around, but the workers will soon lose interest in feeding them.</p> <p>The outside activity is beginning to slow down until fall nectar flow begins.</p> <p>Bees may behave badly, become defensive.</p> <p>Weaker colonies may get robbed</p> <p>Bearding bees are good (strong colony)</p>	<p>The hive population is dropping.</p> <p>The queen's egg laying is significantly reduced, and the drones may begin to disappear this month.</p>	<p>Not much activity going on in the hive now. The bees are settling down for the winter.</p> <p>Drones being expelled.</p> <p>If you use double deeps the cluster will move up, closer to honey stores/</p>	<p>Cold weather will send the bees into a cluster.</p> <p>Queen may begin laying after winter solstice</p>	<p>The bees are in a tight cluster now.</p> <p>Queen may begin laying after winter solstice</p>							
<p>The Beekeeper</p> <p><u>Sources (cont'd):</u> Pickens Bee Club (SC) Beekeeping Calendar In the Bee Yard, Chris Hagwood, WCBAA Newsletters Stahlman Beekeeping Notes, Dana Stahlman</p>	<p>Do not disturb the cluster in cold weather.</p> <p>Check for excess moisture</p>	<p>Lift hive to estimate stores (do this regularly to notice the range of weights)</p> <p>On a warm day, carefully and quickly check the hive for sufficient food (see nutrition below).</p> <p>Brood build-up should be intensifying if the weather has been warm.</p>	<p>If the temperatures are cooperating (above 60 degrees) there be no problem removing the frames for a quick inspection – look for disease laying pattern.</p> <p>Gage size of cluster vs food stores</p> <p>Watch for signs of swarming (e.g. queen cups)</p> <p>1st Mite Check, possibly 1st treatment needed.</p>	<p>Do a complete inspection (warm and still day). Queen right? Plenty of eggs and brood? Nice laying pattern?</p> <p>Pay attention to brood pattern, replace queen if necessary</p> <p>Watch out for swarming.</p>	<p>Inspect the hive weekly.</p> <p>Have a plan before opening the hive.</p> <p>Record observations</p> <p>Mite checks for any that were not yet treated.</p> <p>Check supers, move less full frames in, fuller frames out</p>	<p>Inspect the hives weekly to make certain the hives are healthy and the queen is there doing her job.</p> <p>Watch for nectar to slow down.</p> <p>Check supers, move less full frames in, fuller frames out</p>	<p>Inspections should be quick to limit robbing risk</p> <p>Check supers, move less full frames in, fuller frames out</p> <p>Right-size the number of brood boxes and keep to a minimum based on colony population.</p> <p>Mite check for all colonies not yet treated.</p>	<p>There is not much chance of swarming this month.</p> <p>Watch out for honey robbing by wasps or other bees.</p> <p>You can do a fall re-queening this month or in early September. Queens may be a little less expensive this time of year.</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings.</p>	<p>It's time to do that rare, final harvest for the season. Remember to leave at least 40 pounds of honey for the hive to get through the winter.</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings</p>	<p>There is not too much work for the beekeeper this month, but keep an eye on your hive. Watch out for robbing this month. Install inner cover wedges for ventilation.</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings.</p>	<p>There is even less to do in the hive this month. It's time to add that entrance reducer to the hive to keep field mice from nesting inside. Store your equipment away for the winter. Attend your bee club meetings.</p>	<p>Not much to do with the bees this month.</p> <p>Read a good book on beekeeping, study the latest reports on their health.</p> <p>Year-end assessment, successes and failures</p> <p>Attend your bee club meetings.</p>							
<p>Inspections</p>	<p>Check to see if the queen is laying, gage the volume of brood and brood pattern</p>	<p>Check the volume of brood and brood pattern (signs of queen productivity)</p>	<p>Look for quantity of eggs and brood (signs of queen productivity)</p> <p>Good queens will peak egg laying in April and May.</p> <p>Avoid honey bound condition</p>	<p>Watch brood pattern (signs of queen productivity)</p> <p>Good queens will peak egg laying in April and May.</p> <p>Avoid honey bound condition, give her plenty of room to lay</p>	<p>Egg laying still high, but when pollen slows, egg production will slow</p> <p>Good month for new queens</p> <p>Avoid honey bound condition</p>	<p>Good month for new queens</p> <p>Egg laying will decrease significantly. Good opportunity to confine queen to single brood box. Easier to assess queen production.</p>	<p>Late fall re-queening if she is under performing (requires mated queen)</p> <p>Last chance for queens from most breeders.</p> <p>Natural for queens to slow production.</p>	<p>Queen failure this month or later may require combining colonies.</p>	<p>Limit inspections</p> <p>Hive beetle population should decrease and be less pressure on healthy colonies.</p> <p>Check for excess moisture, condensation under inner cover</p>	<p>Check for excess moisture, condensation under inner cover</p>	<p>No peeking. Opening the hive this month could injure your girls.</p> <p>Check for excess moisture</p> <p>Deadouts are high this month as first cold weather arrives. Colonies without large populations of healthy bees will not survive cold nights.</p>	<p>No peeking. Opening the hive this month could injure your girls.</p> <p>Check for excess moisture</p> <p>Deadouts are high this month as first cold weather arrives. Colonies without large populations of healthy bees will not survive cold nights.</p>							
<p>Queen health, laying</p>	<p>Ironwood or Coma bloom.</p> <p>Carefully check amount and location of honey stores, and feed 2 to 1 syrup, candy board or fondant if <3/4 super of stored honey left.</p> <p>May need dry sugar added if low on stores.</p> <p>Some natural pollen sources available. Bees may gather dry pollen substitute if offered.</p> <p>Add pollen supplements if desired to boost brood production. Once you start feeding, you may need to continue if natural pollen isn't present due to brood buildup.</p>	<p>Red Maples bloom 1st thru March 12th (green pollen)</p> <p>Willow (yellow pollen)</p> <p>A colony rearing brood will consume about 10 pounds of food per week, a colony with small food reserves can starve during bad weather (below 15 pounds, start feeding honey or 1 to 1 sugar water or fondant or dry sugar.</p> <p>May need dry sugar added if low on stores.</p>	<p>Sugar maples, dandelions (orange pollen), ornamentals, fruit trees, red bud will start blooming this month.</p> <p>The bees will continue to consume honey stores.</p> <p>They will also bring in a fair amount of pollen during this month.</p> <p>Feed 1 to 1 sugar water if starting new colonies or to boost small ones.</p> <p>Pay attention to long periods of wet cold weather. Colonies at risk of starvation or brood death if unable to bring in new nectar and pollen for large brood nests.</p>	<p>Alsike Clover, Blackberries, Crimson Clover, Ladino (White Clover), Tulip Poplar (second half of the month), Black Gum, Black Locust, Vetch, Holly, and Raspberries, will be blooming this month.</p> <p>Nectar flow is usually the heaviest this month.</p> <p>Monitor syrup consumption. Likely only needed to build comb for packages or when adding empty frames. May discontinue feeding if the syrup is ignored.</p>	<p>Prison Ivy (orange pollen) to 5/23; Tulip Poplar to 5/26; American Holly, 5/1 – 5/16; Raspberry, 5/12 – 6/2; Persimmon, 5/20 – 6/2; Sumac, 5/23 – 6/10 Privet, Persimmon, and Sweet Clover will be in bloom</p> <p>Offer syrup to new package bees to build comb as long as they continue to use it.</p> <p>Set up water stations.</p>	<p>Sumac to 6/12; Vitex about 6/10 - Clover</p> <p>Set up water stations.</p> <p>Pollen sources abundant, but nectar sources dwindle.</p> <p>Dearth begins the second half of June</p>	<p>Clover to 7/25; Coreopsis, 7/25 – 10/8. Heartsease and Smartweed bloom this month.</p> <p>Keep water available constantly</p> <p>Pollen sources still available, almost no natural nectar sources in sufficient quantities to feed colonies with no honey stores. Will need feeding of syrup</p> <p>Nectar dearth in full swing</p>	<p>Nectar dearth in many areas, may begin to ease late in the month</p> <p>Goldenrod, 8/1 – 10/15; Coreopsis; Asters, 9/20 – 10/30.</p> <p>Goldenrod, 8/1 – 10/15; Coreopsis; Asters, 9/20 – 10/30.</p> <p>Stickweed after 8/14</p> <p>Feed 1 to 1 or maybe 2 to 1 sugar water</p> <p>Caution on feeding pollen because of abundant hive beetles.</p> <p>Do not over harvest</p> <p>Keep water available constantly</p>	<p>Goldenrod 8/1 – 10/15; Coreopsis; Asters, 9/20 – 10/30.</p> <p>Goldenrod 8/1 – 10/15; Coreopsis; Asters, 9/20 – 10/30.</p> <p>Last reliable month to add weight to colony. Hive should be very heavy with cured honey.</p> <p>Feed 2 to 1 sugar water</p> <p>Natural pollen sources still available.</p>	<p>Feed 2 to 1 sugar water or candy boards</p> <p>Only neglected colonies that weren't fed earlier will NEED solid feed this early.</p> <p>Natural pollen sources still abundant.</p>	<p>Feed 2 to 1 sugar water or candy boards</p> <p>Natural pollen still available to bees in our area.</p> <p>May need dry sugar or fondant added if low on stores.</p>								
<p>Nutrition</p>	<p>Consider single dose of oxalic acid vapor or drizzle early in Jan. to clean up residual varroa in hives.</p> <p>Review IPM plans for year.</p>	<p>Varroa mite check (IPM bottom board), treat if necessary</p> <p>Some hives may need testing for Nosema disease, especially if too cold for cleansing flights.</p> <p>Late February is not too early to begin varroa mite assessments.</p> <p>Clean up deadouts before warm weather (prevent wax moth infestations)</p>	<p>Assess for pest and/or disease problems, especially varroa mites, American foulbrood, and European foulbrood) and treat if necessary.</p> <p>Treatments should be completed by late March or early April to limit risk of contaminating honey.</p> <p>First mite check of season on first warm days of March.</p>	<p>No pest treatments this month if you plan to harvest honey.</p> <p>Monitor hive beetles</p> <p>Install small hive beetle traps.</p> <p>No pest treatments this month if you plan to harvest honey.</p>	<p>Continue small hive beetle measures.</p> <p>Check Varroa mite levels, treat if necessary (unless you plan to harvest honey)</p> <p>Monitor hive beetles</p> <p>All medications will vary in monthly usage.</p> <p>Good month to do splits and conduct mite controls of broodless colonies.</p> <p>Early June may allow use of temperature-limited treatments.</p>	<p>Continue small hive beetle measures.</p> <p>Check Varroa mite levels, treat if necessary (unless you plan to harvest honey)</p> <p>Monitor hive beetles</p> <p>All medications will vary in monthly usage.</p> <p>Hive beetles population peak.</p> <p>Alarmingly high numbers may be observed on covers, but does not always spell doom of colony. Right-size the space so bees can challenge and keep hive beetles in check.</p>	<p>Pest controls are critical this month.</p> <p>Check varroa mite levels, treat if necessary (unless you plan to harvest honey)</p> <p>Hive beetles population peak.</p> <p>Increase risk of wax moth infestations.</p> <p>Yellow jacket robbing.</p> <p>All medications will vary in monthly usage.</p>	<p>Varroa treatments should be complete by the end of the month</p> <p>Alternating medications to keep pests from developing immunity to them.</p> <p>All medications will vary in monthly usage.</p> <p>Watch for excessive hive beetle populations</p> <p>Watch for wax moth signs</p>	<p>Remove all pest treatment</p> <p>Assess IPM efforts and plan for next year.</p>	<p>Assess IPM efforts and plan for next year.</p>	<p>Consider single dose of oxalic acid late in Dec. (while hive's likely broodless) to clean up residual varroa.</p> <p>Assess IPM efforts and plan for next year</p>								
<p>Pests</p>	<p>During the last half of February consider adding super/hive body of wax foundation to allow bees to draw out more comb for spring. (Feeding or nectar is required).</p> <p>Opening the hive on a cold day may lead to chill brood (excessive cooling of eggs, larva and brood).</p> <p>Set up "bait" hives late this month</p>	<p>In nice weather, remove entrance reducer (otherwise wait for April)</p> <p>Watch out for extended periods of wet, cold weather. Brood production ramps up, but without ability to forage, colonies can starve and die.</p> <p>Begin supering large colonies in case early flows arrive.</p> <p>Checkerboard large colonies to help build new comb.</p> <p>Equalize hives. Consider reversing the hive deeps.</p> <p>Make early splits</p> <p>Cull old wax and damaged frames.</p> <p>Implement swarm prevention - make splits, remove queen cells, checkerboard, remove queen.</p> <p>Set up "bait" hives.</p>	<p>Remove entrance reducers if not done in March</p> <p>Consider adding honey super(s), watch for overcrowding</p> <p>Checkerboard twice</p> <p>Install packages (take advantage of the poplar flow)</p> <p>Add queen excluder.</p> <p>Pay attention to brood pattern, replace queen if necessary</p> <p>Watch for swarming signs, continue swarm prevention measures</p> <p>Good comb building month</p> <p>Make splits</p> <p>Set up "bait" hives.</p>	<p>Keep adding supers, watch for overcrowding</p> <p>Continue swarm prevention measures</p> <p>Replace failing queens</p> <p>Make splits</p> <p>Install packages</p>	<p>Splitting strong colonies if you want to reduce swarming and expand colonies (like getting free bees).</p> <p>No need for additional honey supers.</p> <p>Late season splits</p> <p>Replace failing queens</p> <p>Feed heavy if you are trying to build out comb this time of year.</p> <p>Last month to expect new comb building.</p> <p>May start to see lots of bearding, but this is not a sign of impending swarming and indicates the colony is large. No further action needed to stop bees from bearding.</p> <p>Stack wet supers (post harvesting) above inner cover to allow bees to clean them up.</p>	<p>Add extra ventilation (shims or wedges)</p> <p>Excessive empty brood area when bee population drops may increase risk of wax moth and have beetle infestations (not enough bees to defend the hive).</p> <p>Continue use of reduced entrances for robbing prevention.</p> <p>Comb building unlikely for remainder of the year.</p> <p>Look out for empty brood boxes or frames. Reduce numbers of brood boxes as needed.</p> <p>Will likely see lots of bearding for next 2 months. No action is needed to stop bees from bearding.</p>	<p>Late season splits still possible (requires mated queen)</p> <p>Continue use of reduced entrances for robbing prevention.</p> <p>Look out for empty brood boxes or frames. Reduce numbers of brood boxes as needed</p>	<p>Remove queen excluders.</p> <p>Reduce entrances and mouse guards</p> <p>Combine weak hive with a stronger one – take winter losses now.</p> <p>Ensure adequate ventilation as weather cools</p> <p>Right size equipment to match bee population</p>	<p>This is a good month to combine weak hives or if they have failing queens. It's better to take losses in the fall.</p> <p>Continue use of reduced entrances for robbing prevention.</p> <p>Add mouse guards</p>	<p>Remove all pest treatment</p> <p>Assess IPM efforts and plan for next year.</p>	<p>Consider single dose of oxalic acid late in Dec. (while hive's likely broodless) to clean up residual varroa.</p> <p>Assess IPM efforts and plan for next year</p>								
<p>Management</p>	<p>Overly large cluster may indicate a tendency to swarm later.</p> <p>Watch for queen cups queen cells</p>	<p>Prime swarm months begin.</p> <p>Watch for queen cells with larvae, dry cups will always be present and do not mean a swarm is pending.</p> <p>Ensure plenty of open brood cells to reduce swarm tendencies. Usually requires open brood COMB, as foundation frames take time to build and the colony doesn't usually wait.</p>	<p>Continue to watch for swarming (less likely)</p>	<p>Continue to watch for swarming (less likely)</p>	<p>Lower chance of swarming thru the end of the year</p>	<p>Harvest as appropriate but do not over harvest.</p> <p>Only those that waited and didn't feed with supers on can harvest in August, however, bees will gather from non-floral sources once the dearth starts. I recommend removing supers in June to avoid this.</p> <p>Melt down wax from cappings or crushed comb and culled frames.</p>	<p>In some circumstances, fall honey harvest is possible, but care must be taken to avoid using supers during feeding to ensure all the honey is from nectar and none is from syrup.</p> <p>Remember to leave at least 40 pounds of honey.</p> <p>Melt down wax from cappings or crushed comb and culled frames.</p>	<p>January</p>	<p>February</p>	<p>March</p>	<p>April</p>	<p>May</p>	<p>June</p>	<p>July</p>	<p>August</p>	<p>September</p>	<p>October</p>	<p>November</p>	<p>December</p>